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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KIGALI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KAMPALA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 254232

EXDIS

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PREL, PREF, RW, KE, UG,  
UN

SUBJECT: UNHCR TEAM FINDS EVIDENCE  
IN RWANDA

SECRET

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NAIROBI/KAMPALA FOR UNDER SECRETARY WIRTH; KIGALI FOR DAS  
BUSHNELL AND AMBASSADOR RAWSON; USUN FOR AMBASSADOR  
ALBRIGHT.

1. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. THIS IS AN ACTION MESSAGE FOR EMBASSY KIGALI. SEE  
PARA 14.

3. SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION. A UN/UNHCR TEAM HEADED BY  
KOFI ANNAN AND INCLUDING CURRENT UNHCR RWANDAN  
REPATRIATION CHIEF BOB GERSONY (PROTECT) TRAVELED TO  
KIGALI ON MONDAY, SEPT. 19, TO MEET WITH KEY GOVERNMENT

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OFFICIALS (E.G. VICE PRESIDENT KAGAME) TO DISCUSS REFUGEE AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES AND INFORMATION OBTAINED DURING THE GERSONY TEAM'S RECENT STUDY OF REFUGEE REPATRIATION PROSPECTS. THROUGH A COMBINATION OF INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS (A TECHNIQUE THAT GERSONY HAS USED IN SIMILAR

REFUGEE FACT-FINDING MISSIONS), THE TEAM FOUND THAT SYSTEMATIC KILLINGS BY THE RPA WERE TAKING PLACE AND THAT REPATRIATION MOVEMENTS WERE NOT AFFECTED BY INTIMIDATION OF FORMER GOVERNMENT/MILITARY IN THE WAY THAT WE HAD PREVIOUSLY UNDERSTOOD. THE UN INTENDS TO PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF THEIR FINDINGS TO TOP OFFICIALS INCLUDING KAGAME. THE TEAM WILL INQUIRE WHAT STEPS KAGAME PLANS TO TAKE TO HALT THESE ABUSES. FOLLOWING MEETINGS IN KIGALI, UNSYG BOUTROS GHALI PLANS TO BRIEF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. THIS WILL PROBABLY TAKE PLACE ON TUESDAY BUT COULD SLIP IF TEAM IN KIGALI IS UNABLE TO MAKE PRESENTATIONS MONDAY.

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VERY SOON THEREAFTER, THE UN AND UNHCR INTEND TO MAKE THE INFORMATION PUBLIC. (FYI. NGO HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH/AFRICA IN ITS JUST PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER ISSUE NOTES THAT INDISCRIMINATE KILLINGS ARE OCCURRING BY THE RPA.)    END SUMMARY.

4. PROBLEMS WITH REPATRIATION. A UNHCR REPATRIATION TEAM, HEADED BY CURRENT AID CONTRACTOR ROBERT GERSONY WHO WAS SECONDED TO UNHCR FOR SIXTY DAYS TO ORGANIZE A VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION PROGRAM FOR RWANDAN REFUGEES, TRAVELED THROUGHOUT RWANDA IN JULY/AUGUST TO EXAMINE THE ISSUES SURROUNDING REPATRIATION OF REFUGEES. GERSONY IS WELL KNOWN FOR HIS WORK ON REFUGEE AFFAIRS PARTICULARLY THE NEXUS WITH HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. GERSONY AND UNHCR/NEW YORK BRANCH OFFICE HEAD SOREN JESSEN-PETERSEN (PROTECT) BRIEFED AID ADMINISTRATOR ATWOOD AND SEVERAL ASSISTANT SECRETARIES ON THE UNHCR FINDINGS OVER WEEK-END. GERSONY AND JESSEN-PETERSEN SHOULD BE PROTECTED AS UN/NEW YORK WAS NOT AWARE OF THEIR PLAN TO SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH U.S. OFFICIALS. UNHCR AND U.N/NEW YORK HAD BEEN BRIEFED THE PREVIOUS DAY.

5. IN SUMMARY, THE GERSONY TEAM FOUND THAT THE RPA WAS SYSTEMATICALLY KILLING HUTUS IN THE SOUTHEAST AND SOUTHERN PARTS OF THE COUNTRY AND THAT THE VOLUNTARY REFUGEE REPATRIATION THAT HAD BEEN OCCURRING FROM ZAIRE WAS NOT/NOT IMPACTED BY INTIMIDATION OF THE FORMER GOVERNMENT/MILITARY UNTIL UNHCR EFFORTS TO PROMOTE AND ORGANIZE VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION FORCED THE ISSUE. THOSE

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WHO HAD BEEN REPATRIATING WERE DOING SO BECAUSE OF THE  
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION IN THE CAMPS. SELECTED INFORMATION  
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FROM THE JESSEN-PETERSEN/GERSONY BRIEFING FOLLOWS BELOW.  
THIS SHOULD BE EXTREMELY CLOSE-HOLD UNTIL THE U.N.  
RELEASES ITS REPORT.

6. SAMPLE. THE TEAM TRAVELED UNACCOMPANIED PRACTICALLY  
THROUGHOUT RWANDA, VISITING 41 OUT OF 45 COMMUNES. THE

TEAM MET PRIVATELY WITH 200 OF THE 300 REFUGEES/  
INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE INTERVIEWED ON A RANDOM BASIS. SIX  
DIFFERENT TRANSLATORS WERE USED, TWO WERE RWANDAN AID  
EMPLOYEES. THE TEAM DID NOT VISIT BYUMBA OR THE FRENCH  
ZONE. INTERVIEWS CONCENTRATED ON THOSE WHO HAD RETURNED  
IN AUGUST.

7. NORMALCY RETURNING? THE NORTHERN CITY OF RUHENGARI,  
BIRTHPLACE OF DECEASED PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA, WAS CALM.  
CITY LIFE APPEARED TO BE RETURNING TO NORMAL. FIFTY TO  
SIXTY PERCENT OF THE POPULATION WHO RESIDED IN RUHENGARI  
HAD RETURNED FROM ZAIRE. THE BORDER WITH ZAIRE WAS OPEN  
AND INDIVIDUALS MOVED FREELY BACK AND FORTH. THE TEAM  
ATTRIBUTED THE CALM TO COLONEL KANYARENGWE, CHAIRMAN OF  
THE RPF WHO REPORTEDLY HAILS FROM THE AREA. THE SITUATION  
IN GISENYI, HOWEVER, WAS RADICALLY DIFFERENT. IT WAS  
INDEED A "MILITARY OCCUPATION." AND FEW RESIDENTS HAD  
RETURNED. AS THE TEAM TRAVELED TOWARDS THE SOUTHEAST,  
THEY FOUND THE SITUATION WORSE. THE STENCH OF RECENTLY  
DEAD BODIES WAS OVERPOWERING AND CAME "RIGHT INTO THE  
CAR." IN KIBUYE, PEOPLE ASKED HOW TO FLEE TO ZAIRE. MANY  
PEOPLE IN THE SOUTHEAST MOVED INTO THE SWAMPS TO GET AWAY  
FROM RPA SOLDIERS BUT ARE EVEN PURSUED THERE. THE TEAM  
FOUND VAST DESERTED AREAS IN THE SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST

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PREVIOUSLY OCCUPIED BY HUTUS. IN THIS AREA SOME 10,000  
TUTSI, NOT PREVIOUSLY RESIDENT, ARE NOW LIVING THERE.  
THESE TUTSIS' ARE INDOCRINATED TO BELIEVE THAT RETURNING  
HUTUS ARE MILITA MEMBERS.

8. RPA KILLINGS. THE TEAM FOUND WHAT IT STRONGLY  
BELIEVES TO BE A SYSTEMATIC PATTERN OF KILLINGS BY RPA  
SOLDIERS. THE NATURE OF THE KILLINGS SIGNAL THAT THEY  
WERE NOT COINCIDENTAL OR UNKNOWN TO THOSE IN KIGALI. THE

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GROUP ACTUALLY SAW THREE HUTU MEN WITH ARMS BOUND ACCOMPANIED BY TUTSI CIVILIANS AND RPA. THE TEAM FOUND THAT EVEN IN THE REMOTEST AREA, RPA SOLDIERS WERE IN POSSESSION OF TWO-WAY RADIOS AND KNEW THE "PARTY LINE". (COMMENT. IT APPEARED TO THE TEAM THAT THE RPA WAS "CLEARING SOUTHEASTERN RWANDA FOR TUTSIS' TO RESIDE. END COMMENT.)

9. PATTERN/METHODS OF KILLINGS. ON THE BASIS OF INTERVIEWS WITH REFUGEES/INDIVIDUALS THE FOLLOWING PATTERN EMERGED AND THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES OF INDIVIDUALS WERE PARTICULARLY VUNERABLE;

-- REFUGEES WERE CALLED FOR MEETINGS ON PEACE AND SECURITY. ONCE GATHERED, THE RPA WOULD MOVE IN AND CARRY

OUT THE KILLING. IN ADDITION TO GROUP KILLINGS, HOUSE TO HOUSE SEARCHES WERE CONDUCTED; INDIVIDUALS HIDING OUT IN THE SWAMPS WERE HUNTED; RETURNEES AS WELL AS THE SICK, THE ELDERLY, THE YOUNG AND MALES BETWEEN 18-40 WERE VICTIMS. METHODS USED WERE HOES, AXES, MACHETES AND FIRE. SO MANY CIVILIANS WERE KILLED THAT BURIAL OF BODIES IS A PROBLEM

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IN SOME VILLAGES. THE TEAM ESTIMATED THAT 10,000 OR MORE A MONTH HAVE BEEN KILLED SINCE APRIL. THE FIGURE WAS LOWER IN AUGUST AROUND 5,000. THE TEAM ESTIMATED THAT 95 PER CENT OF THE DEATHS WERE CARRIED OUT BY THE RPA. ANOTHER 5 PERCENT BY BURUNDI TUTSI SURROGATES.

10. PURPOSES? THE GERSONY TEAM FINDINGS ESTABLISHED THAT SYSTEMATIC KILLING WAS TAKING PLACE AND THAT REPATRIATION COULD NOT BE PROMOTED BY UNHCR UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES. UNHCR'S OBJECTIVE IS TO SEE THAT THE KILLING IS STOPPED AND THAT REPATRIATION CAN TAKE PLACE IN SAFETY AND DIGNITY. FOR THE USAID/STATE BRIEFING, GERSONY DID SPECULATE THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE KILLINGS APPEARED TO BE TO CLEAR OUT CERTAIN AREAS; REDUCE THE NUMBER OF HUTU MALES AND TO DISCOURAGE THE RETURN OF REFUGEES.

11. REEXAMINING THE ISSUE OF REPATRIATION. GERSONY NOTED THAT EARLIER REPORTS OF HUTU INTIMIDATION WITHIN CAMPS WAS NOT BORNE OUT IN THE INTERVIEWS. HUTU LEADERS DID FOREWARN INDIVIDUALS THAT THEY COULD ENCOUNTER PROBLEMS BY RETURNING TO RWANDA BUT FOUND LITTLE EVIDENCE OF FORCING REFUGEES TO REMAIN IN THE CAMPS UNTIL THE ORGANIZED REPATRIATION PRESENTED THEM WITH A CHALLENGE THAT THEY COULD NOT IGNORE. THE EVIDENCE OBTAINED WARRANTS

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RETHINKING OF THE PRESENT UN POLICY TO ACTIVELY ENCOURAGE  
VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION AT THIS TIME.

12. NEXT STEPS. JESSEN-PETERSEN NOTED THAT THE NEXT STEP  
WAS TO BRIEF KAGAME AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT  
ON THE TEAM'S FINDINGS AND TO ASCERTAIN WHAT STEPS THE  
GOR PLANS TO TAKE TO RESOLVE THE MATTER. ACCORDING TO  
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JESSEN-PETERSEN THE SECURITY COUNCIL COULD BE BRIEFED BY  
THE SSRG AS EARLY AS TUESDAY, 9/20. THIS DATE IS DEPENDENT  
ON WHEN MEETINGS TAKE PLACE IN KIGALI.

13. SPLIT WITHIN THE RPA? GERSONY WONDERED IF WE HAD ANY  
INFORMATION THAT SUGGESTED A SPLIT WITHIN THE RPA.  
REFUGEES DIVIDED THE RPA INTO TWO GROUPS. THOSE LOYAL TO  
KAGAME (THOSE INVOLVED IN THE KILLINGS) AND THOSE LOYAL TO  
COL. KANYARENGWE (NOT INVOLVED IN THE KILLINGS).  
(COMMENT. WE ARE UNAWARE OF COL KANYARENGWE BEING PART OF  
THE MILITARY STRUCTURE OR HAVING TROOPS OF HIS OWN.)

14. FOR EMBASSY KIGALI: DEPARTMENT REQUESTS U/S WIRTH,  
DAS BUSHNELL AND AMB. RAWSON TO MAKE DEMARCHE TO SENIOR  
MEMBERS OF GOR CONCERNING THESE SERIOUS ALLEGATIONS, IF/IF  
UN SYG ANNAN HAS ALREADY MADE ANTICIPATED DEMARCHE TO  
KAGAME WHICH WE UNDERSTAND WILL TAKE PLACE ON 9/21.  
PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT WE DO NOT WISH TO GET OUT IN  
FRONT OF THE UN ON THIS ISSUE. YOU CAN WELL IMAGINE THE  
REPERCUSSIONS IF THE SUBSTANCE OF THEIR REPORT BECOMES  
PUBLIC BEFORE THEY MAKE THEIR REPORT. TALKING POINTS WILL  
FOLLOW IN SEPTEL.

15. MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.  
CHRISTOPHER

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